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10/674,705

**REMARKS**

The Office Action of September 7, 2006 has been received for the referenced patent application, both the Examiner's comments and references cited therein have been carefully considered.

In the Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1 and 2 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Wilson (U.S. Pub. No. 2002-0104428); claims 3 – 5 and 11 – 13 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Wilson in view of Cipriani (U.S. Pat. No. 4,952,543); and, claims 6 – 10 and 14 – 16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Wilson in view of Cipriani, and further in view of Kendall (U.S. Pat. No. 5,260,505).

In response to the Office Action, base claim 1 has been amended to more clearly define applicant's invention and to distinguish the prior art. Now recited is a stringed instrument having a solid body with exposed front and rear surfaces, a neck having one end retaining a tuning mechanism and an opposite end joined to the body, a retainer block distinct from and encompassed by the rear surface, and a plurality of strings extending between the tuning mechanism and the block. Applicant submits that claim 1 is neither disclosed nor suggested by the prior art.

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Wilson discloses an electric guitar having a solid body 12 with front and rear surfaces and strings 24 extending from a tuning mechanism 16 through channels 25 in the body 12. However, the strings are not secured to a block distinct from the body 12. Thus, Wilson fails to anticipate the instrument now recited in claim 1.

Cipriani discloses an acoustic guitar in which ends of strings 4 are retained by an element mounted in a brace 20 disposed within a hollow guitar body 2 under a sound board 8. Applicant submits that incorporating the internally disposed brace 20 of Cipriani's acoustic guitar onto the rear surface of Wilson's electric guitar would not have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art in that any reason for such a modification is not suggested by the teachings of either patent. Regarding the Examiner's remark for making such a modification, applicant submits that Wilson's string retaining and relatively massive guitar body 12 would not be reinforced by use of Cipriani's bridge and retained plate device 20.

All of claims 2 ~ 16 are dependent on base claim 1 and recite other patentably distinct features of applicant's invention. Applicant believes the dependent claims also clearly are allowable over the cited prior art.

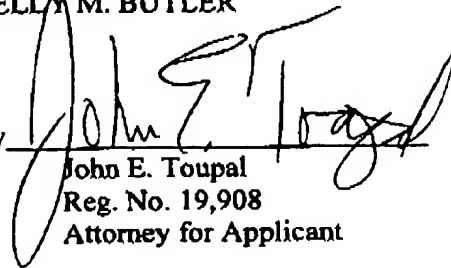
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In view of the above amendments and remarks, applicant now believes that this application is in condition for allowance. Such action is most respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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